United Nations S/2004/525

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 July 2004

Original: English

Report of the Security Council mission to West Africa, 20-29 June 2004

I. Introduction

1. In his letter dated 15 June 2004 (S/2004/491), the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General that a mission of the Council would visit West Africa from 20 to 29 June 2004. Its terms of reference and composition are set out in the annex to the present report.

2. The mission left New York for West Africa on 20 June, and visited Ghana (22 June), Côte d'Ivoire (22 and 23 June), Liberia (24 June), Sierra Leone (25 June), Nigeria (26 June), Guinea-Bissau (27 and 28 June) and Guinea (28 June).

Executive summary

3. The significant investment of the international community and the United Nations in peacekeeping missions and development assistance to West Africa offers the countries of the region a real chance to break out of the cycle of conflict and poverty and to build sustainable peace and development. The mission therefore focused on the link between security and development, the need to build good governance and respect for human rights as the necessary foundation for lasting peace and prosperity and the importance of an active approach to conflict prevention.

4. Achieving sustainable peace and development, in West Africa in particular, requires a collective approach. The region's borders are so porous and problems, including those associated with small arms, fighters, child soldiers and HIV/AIDS, move so easily across them that countries have to work together if they are to have any real chance of effecting lasting change. So, too, must the United Nations. The different missions in the subregion have to coordinate their efforts, as do the myriad parts of the United Nations family present in each country, with other stakeholders to pursue common goals and a comprehensive, integrated strategy. This strategy must encompass the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building and development, including the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in helping create the right socio-economic conditions for lasting stability, including sustainable disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration.

04-41123 (E) 080704

5. In all this the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is playing an increasingly active and valuable role: mobilizing the countries of the subregion to undertake peacekeeping missions; leading conflict resolution initiatives, in particular the recent initiatives in Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire; and working with the United Nations Office for West Africa on a regional conflict-prevention strategy. With the political commitment of its member States and the continued support of the United Nations and other partners, these efforts are gradually helping to build security and stability in the subregion, which, in turn, will lay the basis for greater economic integration and growth.

6. The mission took place at a time of significant progress in the peace-building efforts in the subregion, with the exception of the worrying breakdown in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. Despite continuing challenges, the post-conflict peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone was proceeding steadily. The situation in Liberia had considerably improved with the disarmament and demobilization of a substantial number of combatants, the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the start of preparations for elections in 2005. Guinea-Bissau had held successful legislative elections, a major step towards restoring constitutional order and promoting sustainable peace and stability. The Council was seriously concerned, however, about the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, where the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement had suffered a serious setback and the Government of National Reconciliation had ceased to function normally.

7. In Côte d'Ivoire the mission's key message was that President Laurent Gbagbo and all parties bore individual responsibility for finding a way out of the current political impasse. President Gbagbo promised the mission that he would submit legislation to the National Assembly by 28 July and resolve the issues of the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) radio and status-of-forces agreement by the end of June. The mission believes the Security Council must monitor these commitments closely and, if necessary, take measures against those who fail to honour them. The mission also stressed that attacks on the United Nations or its personnel were absolutely unacceptable; the Council should also be prepared to respond to these with targeted measures.

8. In Liberia, the mission found Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant determined to put the country on the right track towards free, fair and transparent elections in 2005. This will present major challenges: establishing security in the many still-lawless parts of the country; disarming and, more difficult, providing education and jobs for ex-combatants; and restoring civil authority throughout a country that has been largely ungoverned for the last 15 years. The mission hopes that Chairman Bryant's commitment to good governance and democracy will be recognized by donors willing to help Liberia achieve these goals.

9. With UNAMSIL's numbers in Sierra Leone fast diminishing, the mission saw Sierra Leone's immediate priority as preparing to take full responsibility for its own security. Over the longer term, the underlying causes of conflict must be resolved, economic opportunity created and good relations built with neighbouring countries. Many believe that lasting reconciliation requires that former President Charles Taylor of Liberia stand trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

10. The mission congratulated President Henrique Rosa of Guinea-Bissau on the considerable progress already made towards democracy and good governance since the coup of September 2003. It was clear, though, that the Government badly needs

much more financial and technical assistance to carry out its announced priorities. The mission hopes that donors will provide those resources and urges the Government to abide by its principles and remain deeply committed to the successful completion and consolidation of the transition.

11. Throughout its visit, the mission returned repeatedly to several key issues of concern to the Security Council. These included human rights, the role of women and other gender-related issues, child soldiers, humanitarian issues, movements of arms and mercenaries across borders, human trafficking, reconciliation, justice and the rule of law. These also reflected the concerns that had been communicated to the mission by non-governmental organizations at a preparatory meeting in New York. The mission stressed to all interlocutors that these issues had to be tackled in order to address the root causes of conflict in the region and build sustainable peace and development.

II. Process

12. The mission held extensive discussions in the countries visited with the key national and international stakeholders, including the current chairman of ECOWAS, the President of Ghana, and heads of State and Government in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea; the Presidents of the National Assembly in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau; senior cabinet members and ministers; the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS; the International Contact Group for Liberia; the Monitoring Committee in Côte d'Ivoire; the Prosecutor and the Registrar of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone; and the United Nations country teams, diplomatic corps and representatives of civil society organizations. Preparatory meetings were held in New York to discuss the mission's objectives with representatives of the countries to be visited, as well as with non-governmental organizations active in West Africa.

III. Activities and findings of the mission

Côte d'Ivoire

13. The mission emphasized to President Gbagbo, and to other interlocutors in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere, the Security Council's serious concern over the breakdown in the peace process, the impasse in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and the current non-functioning of the Government of National Reconciliation. The President of Ghana, John Kufuor, current chairman of ECOWAS, informed the mission in Accra that the 20 June 2004 Abuja mini-summit of the heads of State of Nigeria, Ghana and Togo, chaired by ECOWAS, had agreed on a number of steps to be taken both by President Gbagbo and ECOWAS to help break the political impasse. On the same day, President Gbagbo delivered an address to the nation in which he announced his intention to request the National Assembly to accelerate consideration and adoption of the fundamental legislative reforms envisaged under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The President also called on all the signatories of the agreement to resume dialogue with the aim of reactivating the Government of National Reconciliation. It was understood that a follow-up summit

would take place in June involving the three main opposition leaders, former President Bedie, former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara and the leader of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro. In Abuja, Nigeria, the mission learned that the Ivorian parties were still discussing the convening of a reconciliation meeting between President Gbagbo and the Group of Seven political parties, signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. Regrettably, the reconciliation meeting, which took place on 29 and 30 June in Abidjan, did not result in an agreement on the resumption of normal functioning of the Government of National Reconciliation.

14. The mission impressed upon President Gbagbo and all parties that they bore primary responsibility for the restoration of peace and stability in their country. The international community stood ready to support their efforts as part of a genuine contract. The mission also called on the Ivorian parties to demonstrate genuine political will and leadership in fulfilling their obligations under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The mission emphasized that the agreement remained the only framework for returning the country to normalcy and that the Security Council would consider appropriate, targeted measures against individuals who obstructed its implementation. The Council's approach was positive, but determined; it would prefer not to have to act against individuals, but would do so if necessary.

15. In this regard, the mission identified three concrete measures as vital for restarting the peace process and facilitating the ultimate objective of free, fair and transparent elections in October 2005. First, the Government of National Reconciliation should be reconstituted and resume its work without further delay and should define a detailed and time-bound schedule of implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. Second, the Government should take the necessary measures to facilitate the early adoption by the National Assembly of the fundamental political reforms envisaged in the agreement. This would help reduce the prevailing mistrust among the parties, create a conducive environment for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and facilitate the restoration of civil administration throughout the country. Third, the Ivorian parties should rise above their personal ambitions and act in unity to forge a better future for their country. They should commit to hold regular high-level dialogue without preconditions. President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Seydou Diarra could help in this regard.

16. The mission further stressed that attacks against United Nations personnel and property were absolutely unacceptable and must cease, in particular since UNOCI had been established at the express request of the Ivorian Government and ECOWAS to support the peace process. The mission also underlined their wish to see the early signing of the status-of-forces agreement between the Government and the United Nations, as well as the operation of United Nations radio to help explain UNOCI's mandate and the role of the Organization in supporting the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement to all Ivorians. The mission warned that the international community would not tolerate a culture of impunity in Côte d'Ivoire and that it would hold all those responsible for gross human rights violations individually accountable. The parties were reminded of the recent establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate all reports of human rights violations since the events of September 2002.

17. The Ivorian parties were unanimous in acknowledging that the lack of trust and confidence among them had seriously hampered the implementation of the Linas-

Marcoussis Agreement. Some parties blamed the political stalemate on attempts by the Government to either delay the adoption of the fundamental political reforms provided for in the agreement or to present draft bills on those reforms that substantially diluted the letter and spirit of the agreement. Others attributed the impasse to attempts, through a deliberate misinterpretation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, to deprive President Gbagbo of his constitutional prerogatives in favour of Prime Minister Seydou Diarra.

18. Almost all the Ivorian parties, however, expressed their preparedness to resume dialogue in order to reactivate the Government of National Reconciliation. President Gbagbo confirmed Prime Minister Seydou Diarra's assurances that: (a) the status-of-forces agreement would be signed by the end of June 2004; (b) the necessary technical modalities would be finalized by the first week of July 2004 to enable UNOCI to start operating its radio programming; and (c) according to a new schedule of implementation of the provisions of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, all the envisaged legislative reforms already sent to the National Assembly (the composition of the independent electoral commission, nationality and land reform) would be adopted by the Assembly by 28 July 2004. President Gbagbo assured the mission, at a meeting at which the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly were also present, that he would convene a special session of the Assembly should it fail to adopt those bills by that date. The President indicated, however, that, as provided for by the constitution of Côte d'Ivoire, the submission of the draft law on article 35 on the question of eligibility would take place only after the national territory had been reunified, meaning after completion of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The mission challenged this assertion and, indeed, on many occasions during its visit, expressed its regret at the lack of trust between the parties, which had led them to put preconditions on the implementation of key elements of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

Observations and recommendations

19. The mission agreed that failure to resolve the political impasse in Côte d'Ivoire would not only provoke a major socio-economic and humanitarian disaster and compound the existing North-South divide in the country, but also would seriously upset the stability of the entire subregion. At the same time, the mission noted that there were encouraging prospects for moving the peace process forward, in particular the willingness of the Ivorian parties to resume dialogue and the preparedness of regional stakeholders, including leaders from West and Central Africa, to assist them in this regard. The presence of the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly at the mission's meeting with President Gbagbo is a sign of confidence-building among them.

20. The mission noted the concern expressed by the Force Commander of UNOCI that, unlike the French Licorne force, the Mission's rules of engagement did not permit it to use force in monitoring the ceasefire and providing protection to civilians under threat of imminent physical violence in the zone of confidence. This discrepancy made it difficult for the two forces to cooperate effectively, as had been envisaged, on operations that might require the use of force.

21. **The mission recommends that:**

(a) **President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Seydou Diarra should, as a priority, consult with all the signatories of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement on how best to reconstitute and reactivate the Government as soon as possible, including implementing urgent relevant confidence-building measures. These should include agreeing on a concrete, time-limited schedule of implementation of the agreement and ensuring that the draft laws on political reforms already transmitted to the National Assembly are adopted by 28 July 2004, in accordance with assurances given by President Gbagbo. Those laws should be consistent with the letter and spirit of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement;**

(b) **All the Ivorian parties, in particular President Gbagbo and the three main opposition leaders, should commit to regular high-level dialogue without any preconditions;**

(c) **The Government should take all necessary measures to stop all hostile and/or provocative actions against UNOCI and all United Nations representatives, including disbanding all militias. Similar guarantees should be provided to all other foreign presences in the country, including the French Licorne force;**

(d) **Additional troops should be deployed to bring UNOCI up to its authorized level as soon as possible, enabling it to establish its presence throughout the country. The Council would welcome advice from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on whether the mandate of UNOCI is adequately defined to allow for readjustment of its rules of engagement to allow it to use force in monitoring the ceasefire in the zone of confidence;**

(e) **The Government should honour its commitment to authorize the operation of UNOCI's radio by early July so that the Mission can help reverse the prevailing climate of misinformation about the United Nations mandate and defuse the culture of hate media;**

(f) **The Monitoring Committee (Comité de suivi) should work closely with the Government of National Reconciliation and ECOWAS in monitoring strict compliance by the parties with detailed and time-bound schedule of implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, which is to be agreed upon;**

(g) **The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations country team should continue to work closely with civil society organizations, in particular women's associations, with a view to integrating their concerns in the efforts by UNOCI and other parties to advance the peace process. Special attention should be paid to mainstreaming the gender perspective into UNOCI's activities;**

(h) **The Government should ensure that those responsible for human rights violations resulting from the events that occurred in Abidjan from 25 to 27 March 2004, as established by the report of the commission of inquiry of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, are identified and brought to justice;**

(i) **The Ivorian parties should commit themselves to cooperate fully with the recently established International Commission of Inquiry into human rights**

violations since September 2002. Once the Commission issues its report, the Government should ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are identified and brought to justice. The Security Council should encourage possible international assistance to the Ivorian judicial authorities to this end;

(j) **The Government must continue to guarantee the unhindered movement and operation of humanitarian agencies and the protection of civilians, in particular vulnerable groups such as children and women. The necessary measures should be taken to remove all roadblocks;**

(k) **As provided in its mandate, UNOCI should start making the necessary arrangements to help the Ivorian parties prepare for the forthcoming general elections, including through the establishment of an appropriately staffed and equipped electoral component;**

(l) **The mission commends ECOWAS leaders for their significant contribution to breaking the current political impasse in Côte d'Ivoire and urges them to remain fully engaged with the Ivorian parties by ensuring that they fulfil their recent pledges to resume dialogue, reactivate the Government of National Reconciliation and expedite the process of consideration and adoption by the National Assembly of the main legislative reforms provided for in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and already sent to the Assembly. The mission further recommends that ECOWAS leaders should consider convening a follow-up mini-summit to review progress made in implementing the concrete steps agreed upon by the parties;**

(m) **The Security Council should monitor closely fulfilment of the pledges made by President Gbagbo and other Ivorian parties to the mission, particularly concerning the adoption of laws by 28 July and the resolution of the issues of the status-of-forces agreement and the operation of UNOCI radio by early July. The Council should consider targeted measures against individuals who obstruct the implementation of these pledges or of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement or who fail to honour their commitments made to the mission.**

Liberia

22. The mission was impressed by the progress made in Liberia since the National Transitional Government took office and UNMIL deployed in October 2003. They recognized, however, that the challenges of reconstruction and peace-building were so great that the international community would have to remain intensively engaged for some time to come. The mission stressed to all interlocutors the importance of all parties setting aside factional differences and working together constructively for Liberia's future. In return the mission recognized the need for donors to live up to their commitments. **The mission urges donors to disburse quickly the pledges they made at the international donors conference on Liberia in February 2004.**

23. The mission identified several immediate priorities for Liberia, the most urgent of which was establishing security. The mission welcomed the fact that UNMIL troops would soon be fully deployed throughout the country and that training for the new Liberian police had begun. **In view of recent reports of unauthorized cross-**

border movements, the mission recommends that UNMIL pay particular attention to monitoring Liberia's external borders.

24. **Given the importance of re-establishing government authority throughout the country, the mission welcomes the deployment of UNMIL civil affairs officers in ministries and parastatals, as well as beyond Monrovia, and recommends that the remaining authorized civilian personnel, including human rights officers, be recruited and deployed as soon as possible.** Many interlocutors stressed the need to reform the security sector and re-establish justice and the rule of law, with ministers of the National Transitional Government identifying training and infrastructure for law enforcement agencies as particular priorities. **The mission welcomes the contribution of the United States of America in this area and encourages donors to contribute further.**

25. Many interlocutors stressed that effective disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration was a prerequisite for building stability and for holding elections. Almost 50,000 combatants have already disarmed, with special arrangements made for women and children. The mission was reassured that the apparently high ratio of combatants to weapons reflected the fact that fighters had often shared weapons. In response to the mission's concern about discrepancies between weapons payments in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said this had been raised with the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in Côte d'Ivoire, which is an Ivorian, not a United Nations, programme. Challenges ahead include the repatriation of foreign combatants, regarding which UNMIL has begun discussions with other United Nations missions in the subregion, and providing reintegration opportunities for up to 60,000 ex-combatants.

26. In Liberia as elsewhere in the region, a common concern was that considerable resources were devoted to disarmament and demobilization but that reintegration and rehabilitation, funded through voluntary contributions, were inadequately planned and resourced. Ministers of the National Transitional Government said that adequate funding for reintegration was crucial. Civil society representatives said that genuine reintegration had to involve whole communities, including non-combatants. **The mission agrees that adequate, timely funding for reintegration is essential and urges donors to contribute generously, including through the trust fund established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).** Given the importance of coordination, the mission welcomed the establishment of a joint implementation unit on reintegration, comprising all stakeholders.

27. All the mission's interlocutors agreed on the importance of holding free, fair and transparent elections by the deadline of October 2005. The recently reconstituted National Election Commission will be responsible for organizing the elections, with the United Nations coordinating the necessary technical assistance and ECOWAS, the African Union and the European Union providing observers. Chairman Bryant said that it was essential, therefore, to develop the financial, technical and logistical capacity of the National Election Commission. The chairman and members of the Commission described the challenges they faced, including voter registration and civic education (particularly in rural areas) and strengthening civil society's role in elections, as well as the core tasks of planning the organization and conduct of the elections. Despite some funding from the National Transitional Government and existing pledges of assistance from donors, the Commission was

facing severe resource constraints; for example, district electoral offices had all been destroyed and it had only one vehicle. **The mission encourages donors to support the vital work of the Commission with financial and technical contributions and underlines the importance of helping women prepare to participate in the elections.** The members of the National Transitional Government underlined to the mission the implications for the election process of the resettlement of Liberian ex-combatants repatriated from elsewhere in the region.

28. Chairman Bryant and the Ministers of the National Transitional Government emphasized the importance of lifting United Nations sanctions on timber and diamonds in order to provide revenues for Liberia's reconstruction. Several civil society representatives, however, argued that the sanctions should remain in force until there was full accountability and transparency and until the National Transitional Government had established control over timber and diamonds. The mission reiterated the Security Council's wish to see sanctions ended as soon as the conditions defined in resolution 1521 (2003) had been met, and welcomed the steps being taken or envisaged by the National Transitional Government to meet high standards in the management of public funds, to prepare to join the Kimberley Process and to regulate the timber sector. It clarified that the diamond ban could be lifted once Liberia had a transparent and internationally verifiable diamond certification scheme, thus paving the way for Liberia to join the Kimberley Process. **The mission recommends that the National Transitional Government continue its efforts to achieve the goals in its action plan on timber, including transparent management of government revenues; encourages the Kimberley Process and the Diamond High Council in Antwerp, Belgium, to work with the National Transitional Government on a diamond certification scheme; urges donors to support these efforts; and looks forward to the assessment of these efforts to be conducted by the expert panel on Liberia sanctions.** The Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jacques Klein also reiterated his proposal that UNMIL be mandated to play a more active role in monitoring sanctions. **The mission recommends that the Council give consideration to this proposal.**

29. Chairman Bryant emphasized to the mission that economic growth and job opportunities, especially through private investment and infrastructure development, would be essential to Liberia's long-term peace and stability and in reducing the risk of a relapse into conflict. Representatives of civil society were concerned that corruption continued to flourish. The mission agreed that eradicating corruption was vital. **The mission encourages the National Transitional Government to continue to take the necessary measures to combat corruption and to explore ways of attracting private investment, in conjunction with donors and development partners.**

30. The mission recognized the challenges of providing the necessary humanitarian aid in Liberia, particularly with up to 350,000 Liberian refugees in the subregion to be repatriated by October 2005. **The mission encourages donors to contribute quickly, particularly to the World Food Programme (WFP) and to repatriation efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).** It stressed the importance of coordination between UNMIL, humanitarian agencies and NGOs, and welcomed the fact that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs also serves as the Resident Representative of UNDP and the Resident Humanitarian Coordinator.

31. Both Chairman Bryant and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General saw subregional stability as essential to Liberia's own security, noting that at the Mano River Union Summit, held in Conakry on 20 May 2004, member States had agreed on measures to strengthen security, such as joint border patrols. However, they expressed concern about recent unauthorized cross-border movements. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General said that UNMIL was working with other United Nations missions in the subregion to develop a more effective response to cross-border problems like movements of arms and mercenaries and human trafficking. Progress had already been made on sharing logistics, military liaison and DDR. Similar coordination was starting with ECOWAS. **The mission recommends that UNMIL continue these efforts and looks forward to the Secretary-General's forthcoming recommendations on more effective use of United Nations assets in the subregion. It also encourages the member countries of the Mano River Union to implement their commitments from the recent summit.**

32. The mission discussed the future of former President Taylor of Liberia with interlocutors in several countries. While some parties particularly representatives of civil society organizations, pressed for former President Taylor to stand trial at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, others were concerned that this could jeopardize the peace process in Liberia. The mission stressed to all parties that there could be no impunity, however, for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and that, as stability was assured, the case for bringing former President Taylor to justice would be very strong.

Sierra Leone

33. The mission was pleased to see that significant progress has been achieved in the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone, with the successful holding of local government elections (the first in 32 years), the gradual handover of responsibility for security in the northern and southern provinces, to the Government by UNAMSIL and the progressive consolidation of state authority. UNAMSIL has thus proceeded with the implementation of its adjustment, drawdown and withdrawal plan.

34. Nevertheless, the gains remain fragile and considerable challenges still face the Government: internal challenges such as widespread unemployment, the outcome of the trials currently under way at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the establishment of full control over the diamond mining areas; and potential external threats from spillover from other conflicts in the region. President Kabbah therefore welcomed the decision of the Security Council to maintain a residual UNAMSIL presence in Sierra Leone for an initial period of six months, from January 2005. He hoped this would allow the Sierra Leone army and police force time to strengthen their capacity and resources further to the point where they can assume full responsibility for the country's national security. **The mission underlines the importance of this goal and encourages donors to contribute to the restructuring and strengthening of the security sector, including infrastructure and equipment.**

35. The mission stressed the need to address the root causes of conflict, including through a poverty reduction strategy, the continuing consolidation of state authority throughout the country and anti-corruption measures. Several interlocutors stressed

the importance of tackling the major socio-economic problems, which, if left unresolved, could present a risk to the country's security. All agreed that creating jobs and economic growth, particularly for young people, was crucial. The departure of UNAMSIL in 2005 would have a negative impact on the country's economy, at least in the short-term. Ambitious growth rates were needed to offset this and help Sierra Leone out of poverty. President Kabbah said that timely assistance from Sierra Leone's development partners, including the European Union, was important. **The mission encourages Sierra Leone's development partners to disburse their pledges as rapidly as possible.**

36. The restoration of effective Government control over the country's mineral resources, particularly diamond mining, remains a major priority. The mission heard that official diamond exports from January to June 2004 had increased to $54 million from $9 million in 2000 thanks to the increase in legal mining, the resumption of Kimberlite mining in Koidu and implementation of the Kimberley Process certification scheme.

37. The mission visited the Special Court for Sierra Leone and congratulated the Prosecutor and Registrar on the progress made since the Council's last mission. The courtroom has now been constructed and trials began on 3 June 2004 with the joint trial of former members of the Civil Defence Force, including their leader, Chief Hinga Norman. The mission welcomed UNAMSIL's ongoing support with security, logistics and public relations. They also welcomed the fact that when the Court's work is concluded, it will leave Sierra Leone with an excellent court facility as well as the valuable legal expertise of those Sierra Leoneans working with the Court.

38. The Prosecutor argued strongly that justice demanded that former President Taylor be handed over to the Court to stand trial. According to the Court's statute, head-of-state immunity did not apply. The Prosecutor confirmed that the indictment of former President Taylor would remain valid even if the Court concluded its work in 2005, as currently scheduled. Asked about the recruitment of child soldiers, the Prosecutor confirmed that this was a crime that fell within the Court's jurisdiction.

39. President Kabbah expressed his concern to the mission about the precarious financial situation of the Court. He had been unhappy with the concept of voluntary funding from the start. **Given the importance of the Court for Sierra Leone's long-term reconciliation, and recognizing the cost-effective, efficient way in which the Court is being run, the mission recommends that donors, particularly those who have not yet contributed to the Court, make every effort to make a contribution.**

40. The mission heard from several interlocutors that the work of the Special Court had a bearing on Sierra Leone's stability; some suggested that its work should be accelerated to ensure its completion while UNAMSIL was still operative.

41. The mission asked about the relationship between the Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Prosecutor said the two institutions were complementary mechanisms, both crucial to lasting peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone. Once the Commission's report is published, the newly established National Commission for Human Rights should begin its work.

42. The Registrar argued that the five detainees in the custody of the Court who were subject to a travel ban under United Nations sanctions should be temporarily removed from the travel ban list if they required medical treatment abroad. It would

be detrimental to the cause of justice if another detainee were to die in custody, as had been the case with Foday Sankoh. **The mission recommends that the United Nations sanctions committee on Sierra Leone consider this proposal.**

Guinea-Bissau

43. The mission's visit to Guinea-Bissau was made jointly with the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau (see annex for the list of participants). The following assessments and recommendations are jointly shared.

44. The mission welcomed the significant progress in the political transition in Guinea-Bissau and commended the Government's efforts to meet its most pressing short-term priorities, including paying current salaries to civil servants and the armed forces and ensuring accountability and transparency in the management of public funds. It further welcomed the Government's decision to strengthen the partnership and dialogue with both private and institutional international organizations, in the spirit of the partnership approach endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in 2003, with a view to increasing revenues and recovering international economic and financial confidence. It also acknowledged, with appreciation, the positive remarks made by the visiting mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which gave encouraging signs of renewed support to the country. The mission commended ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries for the support provided to the political transition in Guinea-Bissau and urges their continued engagement.

45. The mission urged the Government to persevere in its determination to consolidate the democratic process, to promote good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and to create, with the assistance of the international community, the necessary conditions for the organization of free, fair and transparent presidential elections by March 2005. The Government highlighted its need for financial and technical assistance to organize the elections, and called on the international community for its support in this regard.

46. The mission assured the Government that the international community would continue to support Guinea-Bissau's efforts by recommending to international partners, the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors that they provide the urgently needed resources to address the country's social and economic problems, taking into account the Government's priorities.

47. The mission noted concerns raised by the Government regarding cross-border threats as well as the large amount of arms held by the population and recommended that the Security Council give consideration to these issues.

Observations and recommendations

48. It is the mission's view that, despite the appreciable progress made in carrying out a peaceful transition in Guinea-Bissau, the overall situation in the country remains extremely fragile. Every effort must be made to address a number of major challenges, including: (a) restructuring the armed forces into a professional force, with a view to minimizing the risks of relapse into conflict and instability;

(b) strengthening national public institutions; (c) redressing social and economic inequities; (d) promoting broad and inclusive internal political dialogue; and (e) mobilizing internal and external resources, from bilateral and multilateral sources, to promote social and economic development and to ensure regular payment of salaries to civil servants and the military. The mission urges continued international support for the successful accomplishment of these goals.

49. **The mission recommends that:**

(a) **Development partners and the donor community, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the European Union, should respond generously to the positive steps taken by the Government by providing both financial resources and technical assistance to enable it to meet its most immediate needs;**

(b) **The Government and IMF should engage in a comprehensive dialogue aimed at the resumption of an IMF programme;**

(c) **UNDP should continue to assist the Government in preparing for the round table conference to take place late in 2004;**

(d) **The Government should take all possible steps to strengthen a culture of good governance, democracy and respect for the rule of law and human rights, including through institutional capacity-building, with the help of international partners;**

(e) **Bilateral and/or multilateral partners should support the restructuring of the armed forces;**

(f) **The Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the Security Council should continue to monitor and support political, economic and social developments in Guinea-Bissau;**

(g) **ECOWAS should include Guinea-Bissau in its regional policies of containing the proliferation of small arms and other security threats in the region.**

The West African subregion: observations and recommendations

50. In 2003, the Security Council mission called for increased international support for ECOWAS. In 2004, the mission was gratified to learn, both from the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, about the enlarged programme of collaboration between ECOWAS and the United Nations Office for West Africa. This programme aims to address cross-border problems in the subregion, including several identified by last year's mission: illegal roadblocks on national and regional highways (a major impediment to economic development in the region); youth unemployment; and electoral assistance. **The mission supports the joint efforts by the European Union, UNDP and the United Nations Office for West Africa to establish a strategic and operational planning capacity in the office of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS. It also welcomes the initiative of the United Nations Office for West Africa and ECOWAS to identify ways of preventing coups d'etat and other unconstitutional means of seizing or holding power, as well as**

to mitigate those abuses of power that are usually the root causes of attempted coups d'état.

51. ECOWAS and the United Nations system are also working together to translate the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on ways to combat subregional and cross-border problems in West Africa of 12 March 2004 (S/2004/200) and in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 25 March 2004 (S/PRST/2004/7) into concrete projects and activities. **The mission looks forward to a progress report on those recommendations to be submitted towards the end of 2004.**

52. While the end of the conflict in Liberia and the start of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities should end the use of child soldiers in that country, recruitment of child soldiers has not entirely ended in the region. **The mission calls on all parties to cease the use of child soldiers; emphasizes the need to redouble efforts to reintegrate former child combatants; and welcomes the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other partners to strengthen the Child Protection Unit in ECOWAS.**

53. Last year's mission expressed the view that the United Nations Office for West Africa should be strengthened by resources from within the United Nations or from Member States and that its cooperation with ECOWAS be further strengthened. Although it has now reached its full staffing level of seven professionals, the Office could fulfil its mandate more effectively with additional resources. **With the Office's wide-ranging activities and the importance of a coherent regional approach to the conflicts and other problems afflicting West Africa, the mission recommends that additional resources be provided rapidly for the Office.**

54. In the statement by its President of 25 March 2004, the Security Council stressed the importance of a regional approach in the preparation and implementation of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in West Africa. The mission strongly endorses such an approach, given the porousness of State borders and the ease with which weapons and combatants circulate in the subregion. The mission recommends that the office continue to work with the United Nations missions in the region in order to harmonize the various disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in the region and eliminate any inconsistencies among them, such as major discrepancies in weapons payments. **The mission underlines the need to include in the regional approach to disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration not only those countries emerging from conflict but also those which have been seriously affected by conflicts in neighbouring countries, including Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso.**

55. The mission was gratified to learn that ECOWAS is planning to strengthen its moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998 and to replace it with a mandatory convention. **The mission calls on countries from which arms are exported to West Africa to review more scrupulously the issuance of end-user certificates and to take action against those transgressing national laws or United Nations sanctions in this respect. The mission would find it useful to have the Secretary-General's recommendations on what action the Security Council might take to help reduce the proliferation of small arms in the subregion.**

56. The mission is greatly encouraged by West African efforts to increase the subregion's peacekeeping capacity by establishing, as part of a broader strategy by the African Union, a stand-by force for more rapid deployment. **It calls for assistance, particularly transport capacity and other logistical assistance, to be provided by more donor countries and institutions, including through such training centres of excellence as the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra.**

57. The mission discussed the broad importance of developing an effective conflict prevention strategy. **The mission encourages ECOWAS to develop such a strategy, working with the United Nations Office for West Africa and taking into consideration the recommendations of the recent United Nations/European Union assessment mission.**

58. Many interlocutors raised their concerns about the special problems experienced by certain border zones in West Africa and the fact that they are often the first to be affected by neighbouring instability. Particularly sensitive areas include the Guinean province of Guinea-Forestière, which borders on Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, and those provinces in Mali and Burkina Faso adjoining Côte d'Ivoire. **The mission recommends that the United Nations system work on integrated strategies in cooperation with the Governments concerned in dealing with the broad range of problems afflicting these areas in order to try to prevent conflict from spreading further.** These strategies would involve the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the relevant United Nations country teams, the European Union and other development partners, and United Nations peace operations in countries from which much of the insecurity is exported.

59. In several countries the mission heard concerns about unauthorized cross-border movements from neighbouring countries. The mission concurs on the need for continuing action to prevent unauthorized cross-border movements, which remain a cause for concern and a potentially destabilizing factor. **It therefore urges all countries in the subregion to ensure that border controls curb such movements and urges United Nations peacekeeping operations to pay special attention to monitoring border areas.** The President of Guinea assured the mission that the Guinean security forces were patrolling Guinea's borders and confiscating small arms in the border areas.

60. Responses to consolidated humanitarian appeals for the region have often been low. **The mission urges donors to increase their contributions to these appeals. It also encourages greater support for West African civil society organizations, particularly women's groups, in order to help them play a more decisive role in the promotion of peace and sustainable development.**

61. Among other concerns raised during the mission were the alarming rates of HIV/AIDS in parts of the region, exacerbated by the various conflicts. The issue of polio was raised with President Obasanjo, who said the non-provision of vaccinations in Kano State was inexcusable, but that the matter would soon be resolved.

62. Many interlocutors underlined the need to create jobs and economic opportunity in West Africa as an essential element of lasting peace. Without them, countries could easily slip back into conflict, particularly after United Nations

peacekeeping operations have left. The mission stressed the need for countries of the region, working with their international partners, to do their utmost to create a more favourable investment climate. Without greatly increased private and public investment in West Africa, it will be difficult to achieve the levels of economic growth necessary for addressing the pressing region-wide problem of unemployment among the young. **The mission therefore recommends that Governments in the region work towards achieving greater governmental accountability and transparency, through measures such as vigorous anti-corruption campaigns and policies.**

63. The mission agrees with its many interlocutors who insisted on the principle of no impunity for serious human rights abuses, or for those who have fanned the flames of conflict in their own territories or in their neighbours'. **The mission urges the Security Council to take the necessary measures at the appropriate time, including through the imposition of targeted sanctions against the individuals concerned.**

64. The mission reiterated its support for increased levels of collaboration and coordination within and between United Nations missions in West Africa. It notes that the UNAMSIL-chaired working group of United Nations missions has begun its work. **The mission looks forward to receiving the report of the Secretary-General on this subject, as well as to hearing the outcome of the regular meetings of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in the region.**

65. The mission fully recognizes that the international attention paid to the countries hosting United Nations peace missions must not come at the expense of those countries of the region that are currently stable and that show strong commitment to good governance, protection of human rights and good-neighbourly relations. **The mission encourages the international community to strengthen its partnerships with such countries and to continue their assistance to them,** in order to provide an example to others and an incentive for these countries to continue their efforts.

66. The mission would like to record its deep appreciation for the efforts of the four Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, as well as the other heads of United Nations offices based in the region, on behalf of peace and development in West Africa. It would also like to thank all the United Nations officials in the region and the members of the Secretariat who accompanied the mission for their vital role in ensuring its success.

Annex

Terms of reference and composition of the Security Council mission to West Africa, 20-29 June 2004

A. Terms of reference

Regional

- Identify a coherent strategy for United Nations intervention across the spectrum from conflict prevention to peace-building
- Encourage the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its member States, in coordination with the United Nations, to design and implement a subregional conflict prevention strategy, including how to tackle cross-border problems
- Assess what practical support is needed to strengthen ECOWAS, in particular in its work on conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building
- Encourage strengthened cooperation among States of the subregion and between ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and the United Nations
- Identify what additional measures are needed to promote sustainable peace and security, including development, and the role of donors in supporting them
- Consider how to build on the current cooperation among United Nations missions and United Nations bodies in the subregion, including through the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa
- Assess progress towards Council objectives on protection of civilians and children affected by armed conflict
- Emphasize the need for all countries to respect their obligations on human rights and international humanitarian law
- Underline the Council's support for civil society, including women's groups
- Assess the role of sanctions and their effectiveness in helping build peace and stability in the subregion

Sierra Leone

- Assess progress towards building long-term security and sustainable development, identifying areas for priority attention by the Government and donors
- Consider appropriate benchmarks for the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 2005
- Assess the contribution of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in addressing the root causes of the conflict

Liberia

- Support the National Transitional Government of Liberia in its efforts to rebuild Liberia and establish the conditions for free and fair elections in 2005

- Urge all members of the National Transitional Government to work together for shared goals and to ensure that no factions undermine the implementation of the Accra Peace Agreement
- Assess the impact of the Implementation Monitoring Committee in ensuring the full implementation of the Accra Peace Agreement
- Review progress made by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in establishing security and implementing its mandate, in particular disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
- Assess progress towards fulfilling the criteria for lifting sanctions

Côte d'Ivoire

- Remind every Ivorian party of its responsibility to keep the national reconciliation process on track, including through participation in good faith in the Government of National Reconciliation and in Parliamentary business, and by beginning to disarm militias and armed groups, as stipulated in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement
- Assess how the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire and the Monitoring Committee are helping to move all parties towards full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement and credible and transparent elections in 2005
- Review progress made towards addressing the underlying causes of the conflict

Guinea-Bissau

- Demonstrate the Council's support for the Government's efforts to promote national reconciliation and restore democratic institutions, including free and fair Presidential elections in 2005
- In cooperation, with the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, assess the priority needs of the Government and identify what further steps can be taken to strengthen the partnership between the Government and the international community and to encourage increased donor support

B. Composition

The composition of the mission was as follows:

Emyr Jones Parry, head of mission, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Mourad Benmehidi (Algeria)

Ismael Gaspar Martins (Angola)

Joël W. Adechi (Benin)

Irene Vida Gala (Brazil)

Hugo Ignacio Llanos (Chile)

Jiang Jiang (China)

Jean-Marc de La Sablière (France)

Stefan Delfs (Germany)

Sohail Mahmood (Pakistan)

Patrick Chuasoto (Philippines)

Marius Dragolea (Romania)

Ana Jimenez (Spain)

Sichan Siv (United States of America)

In Guinea-Bissau the mission also included:

Dumisani S. Kumalo (South Africa)

Crispin Grey-Johnson (Gambia)

Benedicto Fonseca Filho (Brazil)